

“Writing a Short Story”

1. Essential elements: Characters, setting and conflict/action:

- Characters: Who are they? (How old, what do they look like, how do they act, why do they act that way, what do they feel during the story? Also, how is each character a part of the holiday, festival or cultural tradition that you are highlighting in your story?)
- Story setting: Where and when? Describe the place and time and how this relates to the holiday, festival or cultural tradition that you are including in your story.
- Conflict or action: What is the conflict? How does it come about? How is it resolved and how does this process affect the characters?

2. Once you have thought of these elements, then do the following:

- Add dialogue between the characters, making sure to define any special words that those outside your cultural community or family would not know;
- Provide descriptive words to give the reader more details about the story (i.e., words that describe colors, smells, sounds, emotions, etc);
- Also include descriptive words for the reader to better understand what the characters are feeling during the story;
- Lastly, check to see if your sentences are easy to understand, and not all the same length.

3. Next, re-read your story for clarity and try to see if the story has enough information and details so that a reader who is from outside your cultural community will be able to understand and relate to the story. Also, make sure that the conflict and resolution (or cause and effect elements) are clear for the reader to identify.

4. Optional: Add illustrations!!

[Parts of this lesson were adapted from Dresser, N. (1994). *I felt like I was from another planet: Writing from personal experience*. Menlo Park, CA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.]